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*Increased military
spending ahead:*

New face for the Pentagon?

By RICHARD E. WARD

If the Nixon administration has its way, the arms race will continue indefinitely under the new Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger.

Schlesinger is an advocate of heavy spending on nuclear and advanced conventional weaponry and of closer collaboration between the military and civilian intelligence apparatus. These policies mean steady increases in the military budget and continued U.S. intervention abroad, despite the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

Schlesinger, the third Defense Secretary to occupy that post this year, has also held three major positions this year, each indicating a rise in his own star during a period when the Nixon administration was being rocked by the Watergate scandals.

After serving a year and a half as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Schlesinger was named in January to head the Central Intelligence Agency. And after beginning a major reorganization of the CIA and Defense Department intelligence organizations, during his three months as head of the CIA, he was named to his present position on May 10. That date was perhaps a peak of the Watergate crisis, the same day that two former cabinet members, John N. Mitchell and Maurice Stans were placed under federal criminal indictments.

At 44, Schlesinger is the nation's youngest Pentagon chief, having served in the Nixon administration since 1969. If his name is no household word among ordinary Americans, he is well known and trusted by the ruling circles. His appointment is analogous to the shift to the State Department of Henry Kissinger whose views he shares.

Kissinger and Schlesinger have emerged as the two major figures of an administration trying to pick up the pieces after Watergate and major setbacks in the international arena. During the first administration, Nixon and Kissinger tried to run the whole military and foreign policies from the White House. Virtual figureheads administered the State and Defense Departments, rarely having a role in major policy decisions.

INEFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT

This great concentration of power in the White House failed to be an effective instrument for the American ruling interests. Kissinger was the favored choice of the Rockefeller circles, which he has served faithfully since his Harvard graduate student days. But the effort to bypass the vast machinery of the State and Defense Departments failed, both because of the policies themselves and because Nixon tried to exercise too much personal power.

Now virtually all of Nixon's former administration cronies are under the shadow of Watergate, and even if they escape prison,

they have been eliminated from power and will remain in disgrace.

The attempt to run the whole American imperium from the White House proved to be too great a task. The new appointments of Kissinger and Schlesinger are intended to strengthen the executive branch while at the same time diminishing some of Nixon's personal power. The appointments are also an effort to make the administration more responsive to the dominant elements of the ruling class, while making token gestures toward public opinion via the Congress.

Nixon's obsession with Indochina, his attempt to gain the victory that eluded his predecessors, proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back. The U.S. military effort in Indochina was the single most important element precipitating the domestic and international economic crises, detaching the dollar, alienating major elements of public opinion and sharply dividing American ruling circles.

Although Nixon's views on Indochina were largely shared by Kissinger, the preoccupation with Indochina overstrained the economy, created widespread domestic unrest and tied up the time and energies of most top officials of the White House.

The effort to obtain a victory in Indochina failed despite the resort to the most barbaric war crimes. The final victory of the Indochinese peoples has merely been postponed. But the domestic and international crises remain and continue to develop like a chain reaction out of control.

The American military effort in Indochina, financed almost entirely by deficit spending, unleashed an unprecedented domestic inflation which has spread throughout the capitalist world economy. At the same time, American interests, as seen by its ruling circles, are being neglected in a rapidly changing world environment.

Like Kissinger, Schlesinger apparently never opposed Nixon's Indochina policies. But now the two new cabinet members will be charged with attempting to retrieve America's position in a world vastly changed from when he took office. Now the U.S. is confronted with strong rival capitalist powers, a vastly stronger People's Republic of China and USSR, growing neocolonial sentiments and movements throughout the third world, and, of course, an Indochina policy that is in an irretrievable shambles.

In the wake of the numerous setbacks and contradictions bedeviling the administration, Schlesinger and Kissinger are being given the task of trying to maintain American power and international influence at a turning point in history, when American power is still great but clearly on the decline. It was no accident that Schlesinger became head of the Defense Department at this time.

From the time of receiving his PhD in Economics at Harvard in 1956, Schlesinger moved rapidly into the higher circles of the so-called defense intellectuals. While teaching at the University of Virginia economics department between 1956-63, he became a consultant to the RAND Corp. and the Naval War college. His lectures at the latter institution were published in 1960 in his book, "The Political Economy of National Security," now largely outdated by events. However, it revealed his alignment with the imperialist interests of the ruling circles and his understanding of the relationships between military spending and imperial designs.

Between 1963-69, Schlesinger worked at RAND, where he became a senior staff member and later, director of strategic studies. His own work at RAND involved special or nuclear weapons. During his academic and RAND years he moved in the circles of military specialists that eventually became the backbone of the Nixon administration. These were considered the "hard-liners," actually a diverse group, whose main common ground was their suspicion that Democratic party liberals were soft on communists.

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